

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 0157

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO
SUBJECT: NATO STRATEGY AND MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE

SUMMARY. A RELATIVELY LOW-KEY US APPROACH TO THE PREPARATION OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE FOR NATO FORCE PLANNING SEEMS APPROPRIATE, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE NEW ADMINISTRATION DECIDES TO PROPOSE BASIC CHANGES IN NATO DEFENSE PLANNING AND POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. SUBORDINATE DPC BODIES WILL BEGIN THIS MONTH TO FORMULATE A MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR APPROVAL AT THE DPC MINISTERIAL THIS SPRING. THIS DOCUMENT, WHEN APPROVED, WILL INFLUENCE NATO FORCE PLANNING UNTIL 1979: FORCE PROPOSALS FROM THE MILITARY SIDE OF THE ALLIANCE TO THE DPC PERMREPS, THEN FORCE GOALS FROM THE DPC PERMREPS THROUGH THE DPC MINISTERS TO NATIONS, THEN FORCE PLANS FROM NATIONS TO ANNUAL DPQ REVIEW SIN BRUSSELS AND IN APITALS.

2. THE PROCEDURES OF THIS FORCE PLANNING CYCLE ARE ALWAYS PONDEROUS, SOMETIMES RATHER REMOTE FROM REAL ISSUES, AND OCCASIONALLY ACTUALLY INHIBIT PROGRESS. HOW-CONFIDENTIAL

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EVER, THE MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE SEQUENCE THAT STARTS THE TWO-YEAR CYCLE DOES TEND TO ELICIT FROM NATIONS SOME SUBSTANTIAL VIEWS ON NATO STRATEGY, ON INCREASING DEFENSE EFFORTS, AND ON WHICH AREAS OF EFFORT MERIT PRIORITY ATTENTION.

3. THE GENERAL INCLINATION HERE, IN THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF AND AMONG OTHER NATIONAL DELEGATIONS, IS TO REVISE RATHER THAN COMPLETELY RE-WRITE THE EXISTING 1975 GUIDANCE, PROBABLY NOT IN VERY SIGNIFICANT RESPECTS. SO IF THE NEW ADMIN-

ISTRATION DECIDES TO ADOPT A RELATIVELY LOW PROFILE
TOWARD MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE, THE NATURAL COURSE OF
EVENTS HERE WILL TEND TO SUPPORT THAT DECISION.

4. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSES
MAJOR REVISIONS IN NATO'S DEFENSE PLANNING AND POLICY
OBJECTIVES, THE IMMINENTLY UPCOMING MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE
EXERCISE IS PROBABLY NOT A VERY GOOD VEHICLE TO USE,
LARGELY BECAUSE IT HAS BECOME SO BUREAUCRATIC IN FORMAT.
MAJOR POLICY PROPOSALS WOULD PROBABLY FARE BETTER IF
INTRODUCED AT HIGH LEVELS OUTSIDE OR ON THE PERIPHERY
OF THE MEASURED CADENCES OF THE FORMAL NATO FORCE PLAN-
NING SYSTEM.

5. IT THEREFORE SEEMS TO US THAT, REGARDLESS OF THE NEW
ADMINISTRATION'S DECISIONS ON WHETHER AND, IF SO, HOW
HARD AND HOW SOON TO PRESS FOR NATO DEFENSE POLICY
CHANGES THAT THE ADMINISTRATION MAY HAVE IN MIND, THE
MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE EXERCISE SHOULD CONTINUE TO CONCEN-
TRATE ON REVISING THE EXISTING GUIDANCE DOCUMENT. SUCH
A COURSE OF ACTION WOULD HAVE THE ANCILLARY ADVANTAGE
OF ALLOWING TIME FOR THE NEW ADMINISTRATION TO FORMULATE
CAREFULLY THE LARGE LINES OF ITS PREFERRED POLICIES
BEFORE INTRODUCING THEM INTO NATO'S MULTINATIONAL FORA.
MEANWHILE, AS US POLICIES TAKE SHAPE, WE WOULD UNDOUBTED-
LY BE ABLE TO INFLUENCE THE ONGOING MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE
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EXERCISE AND OTHER ACTIVITIES IN WAYS CONGENIAL TO THE
DIRECTIONS OF THOSE POLICIES.

6. IN ANY EVENT, WE WILL PROVIDE SPECIFIC PROPOSED
CHANGES TO MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE FOR WASHINGTON'S CON-
SIDERATION NEXT WEEK, AND WILL WELCOME VIEWS ON OUR
SUGGESTED APPROACH. STRAUSS-HUPE

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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